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AFRICAN VICTORY

With

THE BRITISH FORCES

FROM EL ALAMEIN TO CAPE BON

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THE EXPULSION OF THE AXIS FROM NORTH AFRICA



Owing to the limited space available in a publication of this size, it has not been possible in this picture record to mention by name all the countries and races whose men fought at various times and places during the African campaign, nor does it purport to deal with more than the British contribution to the final great attack which began at El Alamein. Not only from Britain, from the Dominions of the British Commonwealth, from India and from the Colonies, but from America, from France and from almost all the nations whose homelands are still under the Nazi heel came the gallant men who in the air, on land and at sea helped bring a continent out of the shadow.

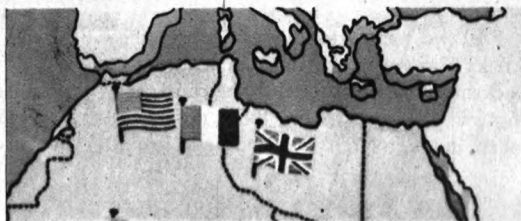
OCTOBER 1942

From Casablanca in the west to El Alamein in the east, only 60 miles from Alexandria and on the borders of the vital Nile Delta, the Axis ruled supreme. The Afrika Korps and the legions of Italy controlled all the land of North Africa with the exception of Spanish Morocco.



MAY 1943

In 29 weeks the Axis armies were totally destroyed. Of 350,000 men, 638 escaped to Italy, and the entire continent was cleansed of German-Italian tyranny. Such is the victory of the British, American and French armies.





Standing up in a staff car with his hand resting on the windscreen in the characteristic position of his master, Rommel (now promoted to Field Marshal) points confidently across the desolate wastes of western Egypt to the vital objectives of Alexandria, Cairo and the Suez Canal. He has promised Germany that the Axis will never go back.

OCTOBER 1942 . . .

COME back with the Eighth Army to the grim days in the autumn of 1942 when Rommel stood at the gates of Egypt, and then follow the British Army in this picture portrayal through twenty-nine weeks of triumphant campaigning to the final surrender of the Axis at Cape Bon in Tunisia :—

It is late in October 1942. The hard-pressed Eighth Army is disposed on a narrow front only 60 miles from the outskirts of Alexandria. On its right flank is the sea, and the men on its left flank gaze down the cliffs leading to the impassable Qattara Depression. This is terrain suitable only for fighting. Bleak, godless desert, devoid of any growth but the poorest scrub, without water and swept by continual bleaching sandstorms.

For two years the Eighth Army, the Afrika Korps and the Italians have swept back and forth across Africa, the culminating crisis occurring on June 11th-13th when, in a fierce tank battle near Tobruk,

the Eighth Army lost a high proportion of its tank force. On June 21st Tobruk fell and with it 23,000 men were lost. General Auchinleck was forced to retreat 325 miles to the present position at El Alamein.

Rommel has been to Berlin—he is now a Field Marshal. Twice he has attacked in a final effort to break through to the Nile; each time he has been bloodily beaten back. Into this grim picture Winston Churchill stepped, bringing with him two new Commanders—Generals Alexander and Montgomery—and promises of vast new supplies. This is a crisis for the British Empire; for weeks now they have been desperately strengthening their short line and have made it exceedingly strong. Rommel has already tried to turn it and failed; it can only be broken by a direct frontal attack, but he is confident and he has already promised his men that within a few days they will be enjoying the luxuries of Cairo.



Meanwhile British and American factories have been supplying the front line

For months now the docks and harbours of Egypt have been ringing with the hiss and clatter of steam cranes; the hoot of great freighters nosing their way into the docks; the toot of the tugs rushing hither and thither. Full 12,000 miles (down through the South Atlantic, round the Cape of Good Hope, and up through the Suez Canal) have separated these gallant Merchant Navy men from their home ports in the British Isles.

Capetown, Durban, Mombasa, Aden and the Suez, have seen one long procession of heavily laden freighters with the tell-tale turrets of tanks and the barrels of guns often visible crammed on their decks.

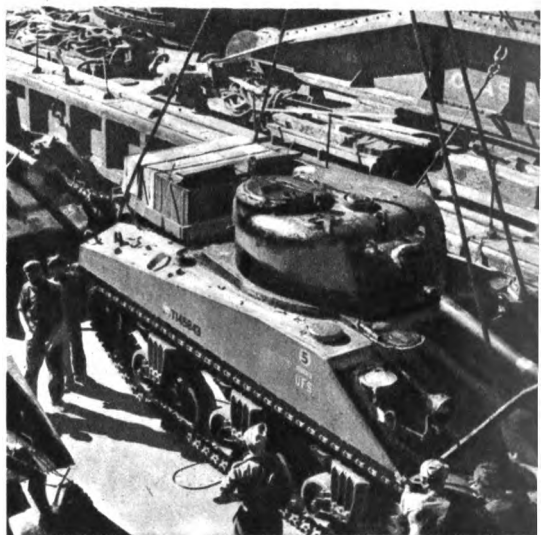
But the Mediterranean has seen few British or American ships; the Axis command the Sicilian narrows. Dive-bombing and U-boats make the passage practically impossible. Across this short sea-passage Rommel has been ferrying

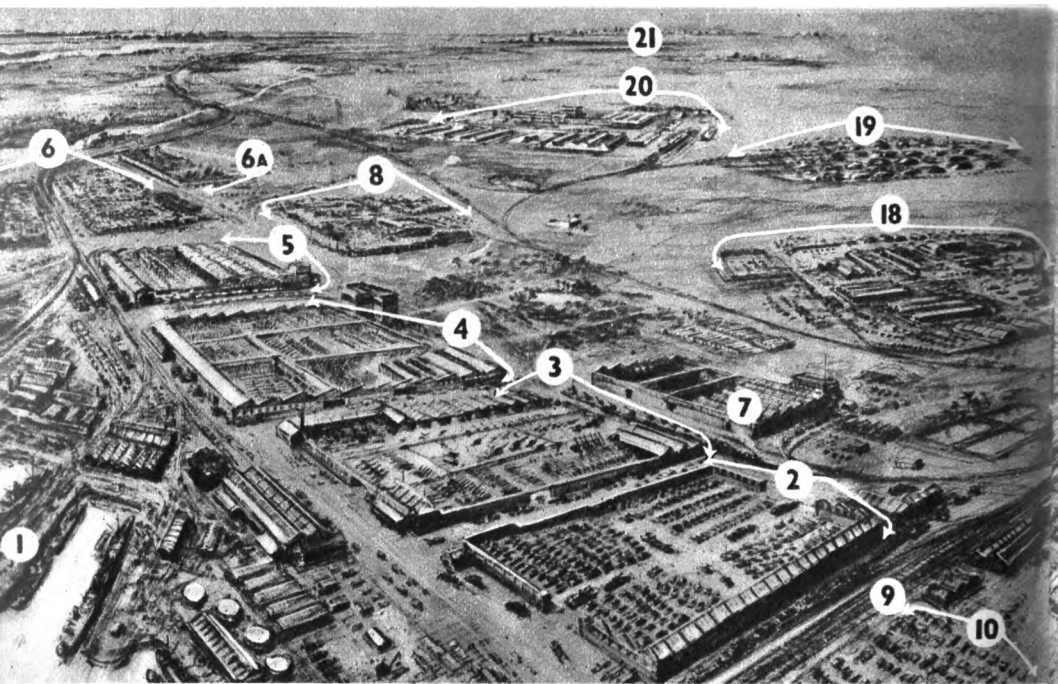


Harbours all round the coast of Africa to Alexandria and Port Said are ringing with the hiss and clatter of steam cranes and the cries of stevedores unloading guns and equipment of all sorts and American "Sherman" tanks like those below.

arms, equipment—and Germans. True, the R.A.F. has made the passage perilous but has been unable to prevent it completely. The slow building up of British resources has been tedious but vital. The men about to go into battle in October and November of 1942 left their homeland way back in May and June!

Through the streets of Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, swarm thousands of khaki and R.A.F. blue uniforms, and interspersed with them obvious Britishers in civilian dress with the little silver badge in their lapel reading—"M.N." Without these heroes of the Merchant Navy no victory would be possible.

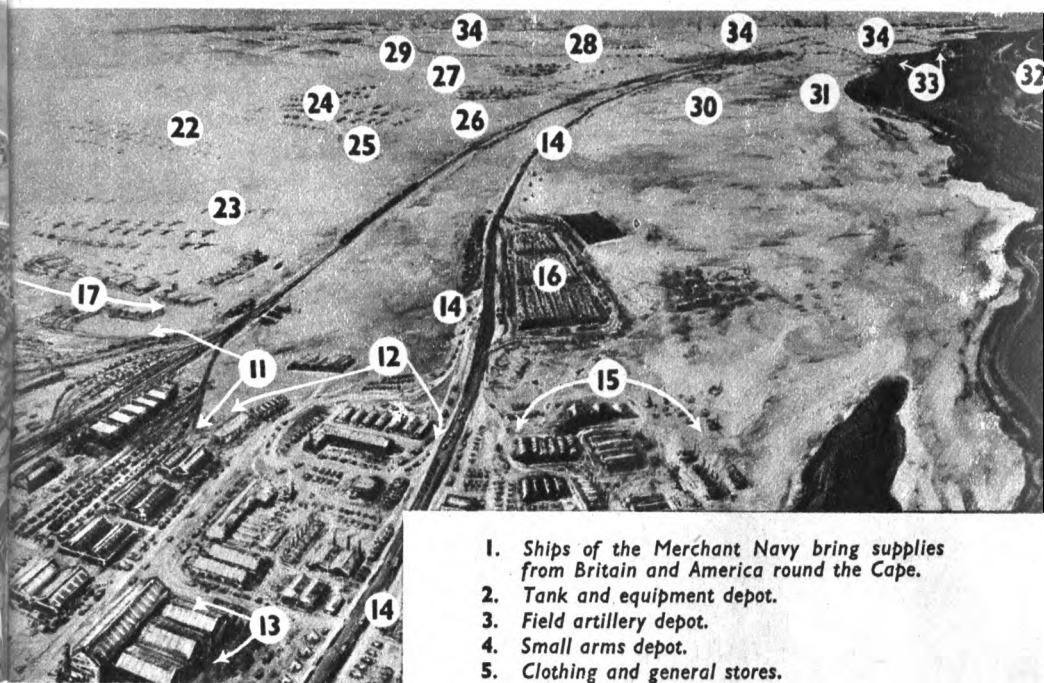




The miracle of organisation behind the lines

Just outside Cairo in the Nile Delta, on the outskirts of the desert not many miles from Rommel's forward positions, are the giant army depots, built by the Middle East Command. Experts regard them as among the finest military achievements in the history of warfare. They connect by road,

Lieut.-General Sir Wilfrid Lindsell, Quarter-master General, Middle East Command. The success of the campaign portrayed in the following pages is largely dependent upon his organisation.



rail and water with the Eighth Army. Through another network of roads (many of them newly built), vast stores can reach British forces in Palestine, Syria and Iraq and even, if necessary, Iran.

These depots are vital in the campaign about to open—they are not factories. They are bases, every single item of military equipment must reach them by sea from Britain or the U.S.A. Equipment must be unpacked, assembled and tested and held in store ready for immediate dispatch. Tanks, ammunition, stores, all must be delivered under the hail of shell-fire and bombing at the precise moment they are needed and at any point on the front.

The panorama picture above, drawn by Capt. Bryan de Grineau and published by arrangement with the *Illustrated London News*, gives some idea of the vast supply organisation necessary for Britain's armies.

1. Ships of the Merchant Navy bring supplies from Britain and America round the Cape.
2. Tank and equipment depot.
3. Field artillery depot.
4. Small arms depot.
5. Clothing and general stores.
6. Vehicle reserve depots.
- 6a. Anti-aircraft ordnance depot.
7. Wireless equipment depot.
8. Royal Engineers stores depot.
9. Railway line to El Alamein and Tobruk.
10. Load-carrying-vehicle park.
11. Railway marshalling yards.
12. Royal Army Service Corps food depot and stores.
13. Cold storage plant.
14. Main coast road.
15. Royal Army Service Corps field bakeries.
16. Petrol and lubricant supplies.
17. Royal Air Force maintenance depot.
18. Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers rear workshops.
19. Desert ammunition depot.
20. Royal Army Medical Corps General Hospital.
21. General Headquarters, Cairo.
22. R.A.F. Fighter Group.
23. R.A.F. Bomber Group.
24. Army Headquarters.
25. Army-Air Co-operation.
26. R.A.M.C. casualty clearing station.
27. Royal Army Ordnance Corps field park.
28. Corps Headquarters.
29. Royal Army Service Corps field maintenance.
30. Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers field workshops.
31. Railhead depot, Royal Army Service Corps.
32. Naval convoy pressing forward with supplies.
33. Beach-landing depots.
34. Firing line.





These men are in command . . .

GENERAL THE HON. SIR HAROLD ALEXANDER, G.C.B., C.S.I., D.S.O., M.C., *Commander-in-Chief, Middle East.*

Born 1891. Educated at Harrow and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. Gazetted Second Lieutenant Irish Guards, Sept. 1911. Fought 1914-18: Mons; the Marne, Loos, the Somme, Arras; 5 mentions in dispatches, twice wounded, awarded D.S.O., M.C., and Legion of Honour.

Of his Great War record Kipling wrote "... His subordinates loved him, even when he fell upon them blisteringly for their shortcomings, and his men were all his own."

Commanded German and Lettish troops during the Baltic operations following the Armistice of 1919. He was the last man out of Dunkirk in 1940. In 1942 conducted the long fighting retreat from Burma to the mountains of Assam.

LIEUT. GENERAL SIR BERNARD MONTGOMERY, K.C.B., D.S.O., *General Officer Commanding-in-Chief the Eighth Army.*

Born London 1887. His father was Bishop of Tasmania 1889-97. When a small boy once saw Australians on their way overseas and said "I am going to be a soldier, and if I am a good soldier perhaps one day I'll have an army of my own."

Educated at St. Paul's School and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. Gazetted Second Lieutenant Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Fought in the 1914-18 war, won the D.S.O. and was severely wounded. Awarded the French War Cross and mentioned six times in dispatches. Served with the British Army on the Rhine after the Armistice. Commanded the 3rd Division in France 1939-40; took part in the Dunkirk evacuation.

He neither smokes nor drinks, and has become famous for his athletic and spartan regime upon which is built the stamina of the Eighth Army.



The great barrage opens

9.29 p.m. October 23rd, 1942.

9.30 p.m. "FIRE!!"





It is 9.25 p.m. on Friday, October 23rd, 1942; all is silent across the vast wastes of the moonlit desert. Over a front of six miles General Montgomery has ranged one 25-pounder gun every 23 yards.

For some weeks, since beating back the last enemy attack, the men of the Eighth Army, French heroes from the Bir Hakeim days, and Greeks have been resting in readiness for the great days to come.

It is now 9.29; officers stand by each gun gazing intently at the second hands of their watches. The still air of the desert is heavy with the sense of impending explosion,

9.30. "FIRE!!" The silence of the desert is shattered by the appalling and

Continued at the foot of page 14.

The cameraman is standing between the Eighth Army's artillery and the enemy. The shells are screaming overhead and the whole desert is lit with the flashes from massed guns firing as fast as they can be loaded.

This gun crew of a 25-pounder is working for hours on end without cessation.



An eye-witness describes the vital hours . . .

During this great barrage Godfrey Talbot of the BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION has been standing by the guns. This is how he afterwards described the scene in a broadcast to the British people :—

“Up to the commencement it was to all appearances just one of those normal, fairly quiet desert nights which we’ve known up here during the past weeks. The full moon shone down brightly; the scene was peaceful.

“Then, quite suddenly, with a crack and a roar, the barrage opened—our barrage—and in a minute or two everything was let loose on the enemy. It went on, lifted, and went on again. It was terrific. It must have been the biggest barrage of the war, flashing and roaring almost without pause for hours. The desert has known nothing like it.

“The guns were still going at dawn, and behind it our infantry had moved up and had cleared a gap for our armour to pass through. So, very early in the morning, the tanks started to move. You couldn’t see them—just clouds of dust on the stony plain, and a clattering rumble. Aircraft—our aircraft—throbbed overhead, dropped flares, and then bombed the enemy good and proper.

“Enemy guns didn’t seem to be making a great deal of reply to ours: enemy aircraft were kept on the defensive. It was a terrific night, a night of fearful din; the roar and crash of our guns is still echoing in the ears of those who were there.”

A few days after, another great barrage is launched against Rommel. This is what Godfrey Talbot says about it :—

“We put over another tremendously powerful artillery barrage all last night, almost continuous, non-stop split-second for hours. For a very long period there wasn’t a single second when not one gun but many were blazing away—heavy stuff. We had the B.B.C. recording truck up there with the guns; when very near, explosions from the batteries almost lifted our gear up in the air and put it down again. Farther away, recording was possible. But it couldn’t give the impression of the full intensity and noise and wide spread of the shelling. All the sky was alive with miles of flashing, and the enemy aircraft—a few—came over and dropped parachute flares which hung in the sky like bright candles on a giant chandelier. With all that, and the still brilliant moon, there wasn’t much darkness in this part of the desert.”

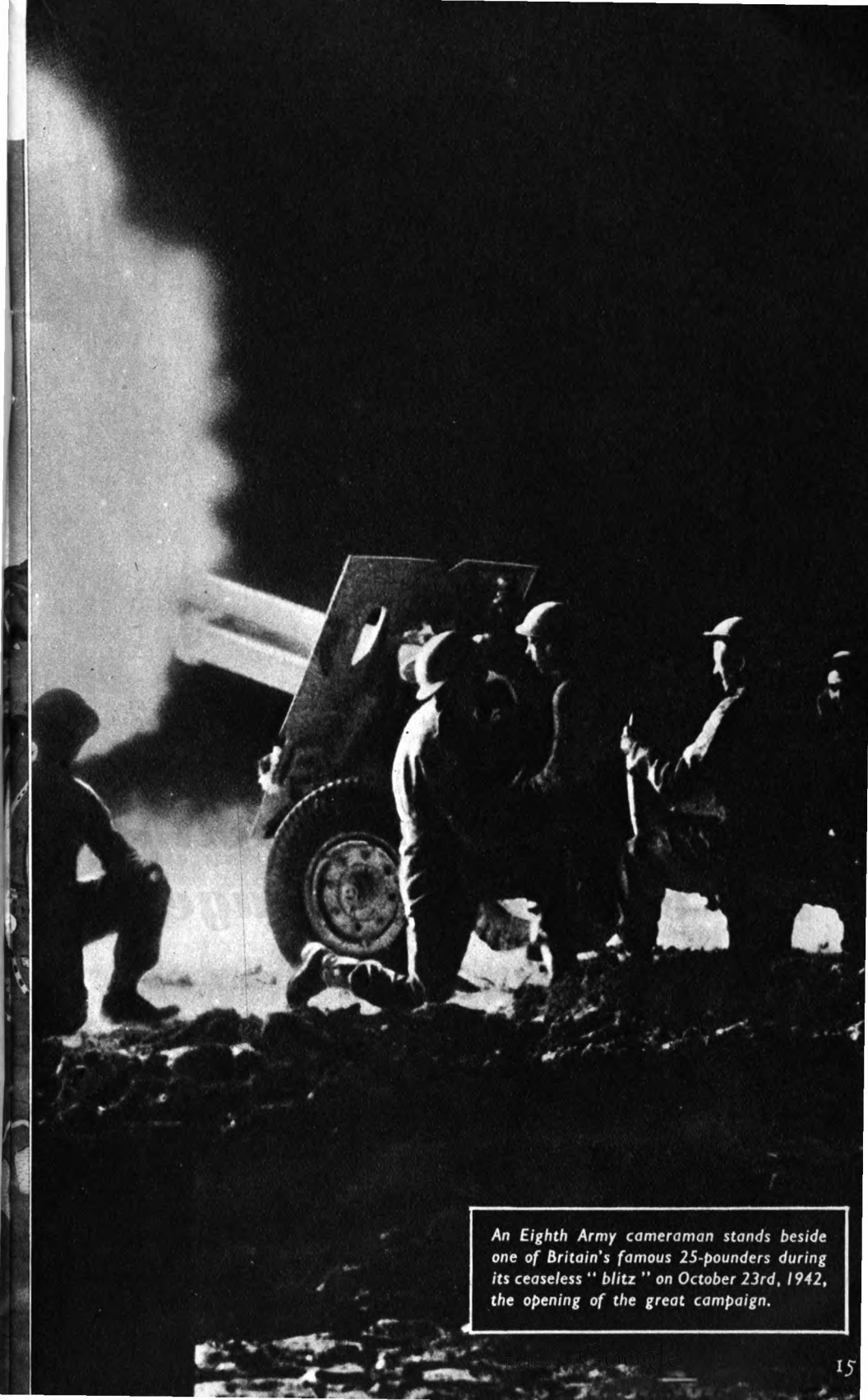
Continued from page 13.

deafening roar of the massed 25-pounders of General Montgomery’s artillery.

Behind their ear-splitting crackle can be heard the all-pervading thunder of Royal Air Force bombers, screaming over the German positions to tear up their communications and prevent the massing of reinforcements.

Rommel never expected this! He left

his centre deliberately weak, held by Italians in the hope that the British attack will be made at that point, and he ranged powerful Panzer Divisions on either side ready to pinch inwards with a shattering, flanking, counter-attack. But this frontal artillery “blitz” on his northern sector has come as a complete surprise.



An Eighth Army cameraman stands beside one of Britain's famous 25-pounders during its ceaseless " blitz " on October 23rd, 1942, the opening of the great campaign.



Through the enemy's advanced minefields in the heat of the attack of the early morning they call for the surrender of the crew of a disabled German tank.

Now the infantry follow the creeping barrage . . .

At 10 p.m. Sappers, with mine detectors, slowly move forward . . .

*. . . followed by men
carrying white tape.*





It is 10 p.m. on October 23rd. Just thirty minutes after the opening of this deafening barrage. Men of the Sapper Corps, each armed with a mine detector like some giant vacuum cleaner, slowly advance into the gloom towards the German positions. As the detector gives its tell-tale buzz, the Sappers deftly remove the enemy mine and, sweeping

their detectors backwards and forwards, move slowly onwards. Behind them are men with miles of white tape on rollers. They lay down a path for the following infantry, a path which will at least be safe from the danger of exploding mines.

By 5.30 next morning they have advanced four miles on a line six miles long!

Infantry follow the lines of the tape across clear ground . . .

. . . played into battle by the Scottish Pipe Major.





General Montgomery watches his tanks move forward.

Tanks rush forward through the gap . . .

The sun has risen over the desert in the early morning of November 2nd. After days of fighting, the infantry have at last cut their way clean through the last line of Rommel's defences. German reconnaissance aircraft are still reporting to Rommel that the British 10th Corps is encamped for training in the Nile Delta. Tents and equipment are all plainly visible—but he is mistaken. The Luftwaffe has been cheated! What looks like the 10th Corps is a dummy camp—only a few nights ago two British Armoured Divisions and the New Zealand Infantry Division were rushed forward, unknown to Rommel, under cover of night. On the very morning that German reconnaissance was comforting Rommel with false information about the 10th Corps, hundreds of tanks—"Crusaders," "Shermans," "Grants"—roared forward

Continued on page 21.

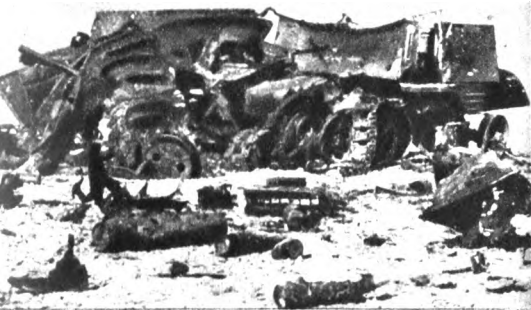


"Crusader" tanks of the Eighth Army 10th Corps brought up from the Nile Delta rush forward into the gap made by the infantry.





Now come the main bulk of the 10th Corps Armoured Divisions.



Destroyed in the great tank battle at El Aqaqir. These four German tanks tell of the decisive destruction of Rommel's Panzers.



Forward





One of the Eighth Army's American-built tanks passes a burning Mark IV German tank.

to the great tank battle

Continued from page 18.

through the mighty gap cut by the infantry.

Rommel is obliged to rush the 21st Panzer Division and the Italian Ariete Armoured Division from his central sector across his front to the northern sector where the break-through has occurred, but his Panzers are fighting fresh British and New Zealand troops. In the great tank battle of El Aqaaqir his forces are utterly broken. The scene of destruction is

desolate in the extreme. For miles and miles across the dead flat blistering battlefield of sand and rock there is one long panorama of smouldering burning German tanks.

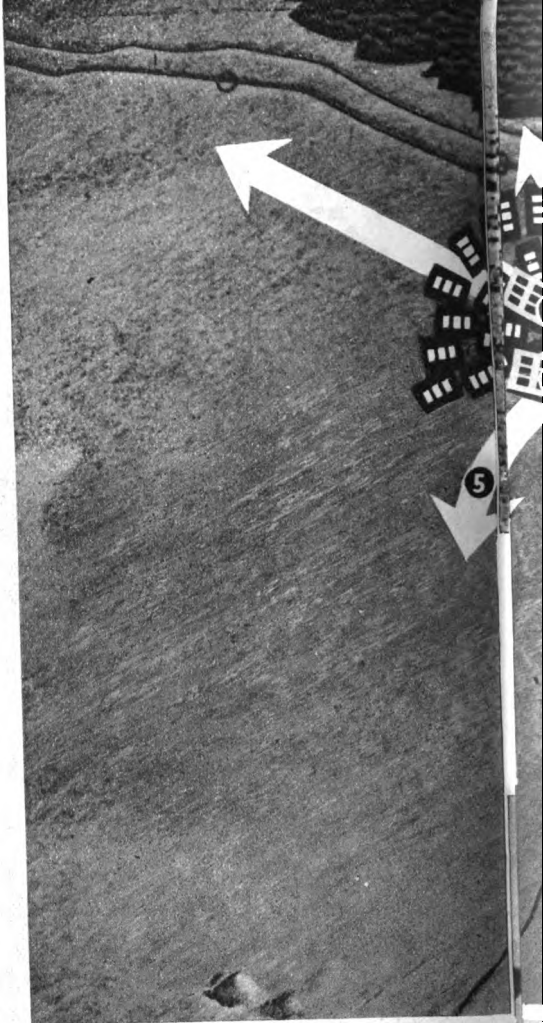
Men of the Eighth Army are moving in and around the scene of destruction, rounding up prisoners—they include General Ritter von Thoma, commanding the Afrika Korps in the field.

The great break- through

For ten days the blistering sandy wastes have been rent with the inferno of stuttering automatics, screaming shells and clattering, grinding tanks. First the mighty artillery barrage followed by the infantry fighting their way to the break-through near the coast. Now comes the mighty tank drive of the 10th Corps, brought up in secret from the Nile Delta.

Rommel's rapid transfer of his Panzer Divisions from his centre to his left wing to meet the break-through has failed. The main armoured spearhead of the Eighth Army presses forward after Rommel who has begun his great retreat, a retreat which, although he does not know it, is not to stop until the Axis debacle at Cape Bon in Tunisia more than 1,700 miles away !

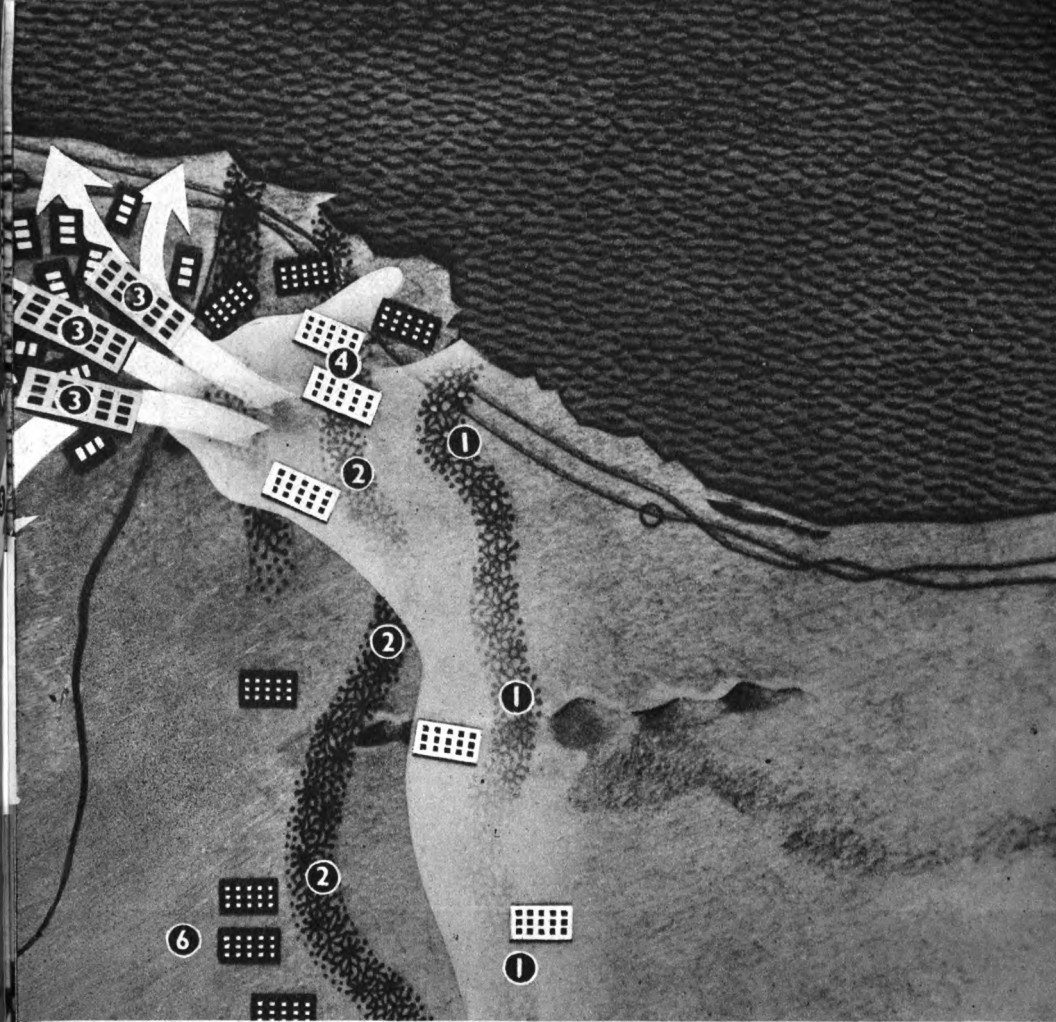
As soon as the armoured divisions have broken through on November 3rd, General Montgomery orders New Zealand infantry to swing round to the south to cut off the Italian Divisions of Rommel's original centre. Within a few days, thousands of Italians, deserted by Rommel, robbed of all motor transport, all of them exhausted, many of them starving and suffering from thirst, are rounded up by the New Zealanders' armoured cars and transferred eastwards to prison camps.

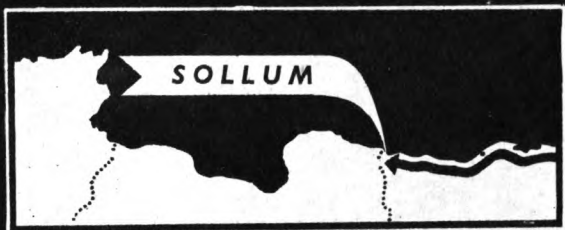


The picture map above shows how the final break-through took place :—

1. *The original Eighth Army positions.*
2. *The original Axis defence in depth.*
3. *The great infantry break-through.*
4. *Armoured divisions of the 10th Corps coming fresh from the Nile Delta.*
5. *New Zealand infantry swing round to cut off the Italians.*
6. *Italian divisions of Rommel's original centre.*

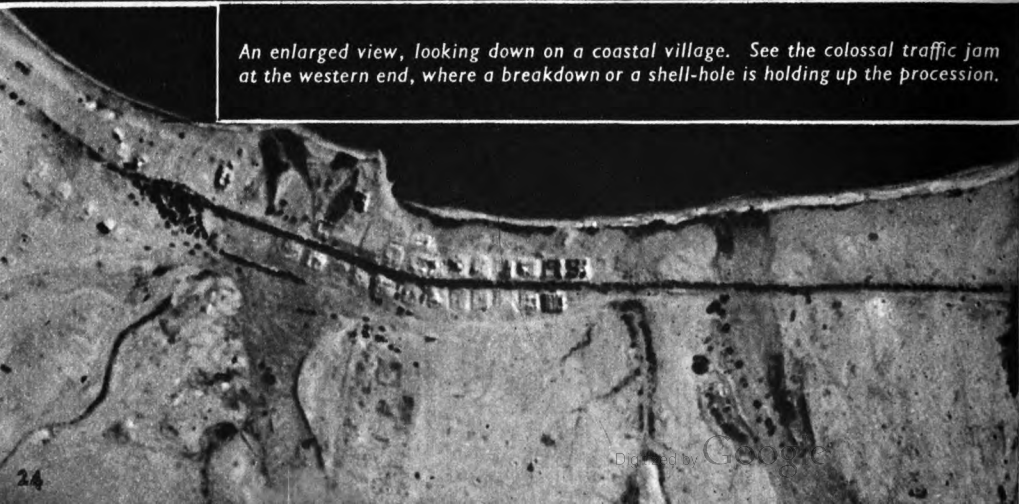
Africans of the Pioneer Corps hurriedly rebuild and replace bridges blown up by the retreating enemy.







The R.A.F. looks down on fleeing Rommel

An enlarged view, looking down on a coastal village. See the colossal traffic jam at the western end, where a breakdown or a shell-hole is holding up the procession.

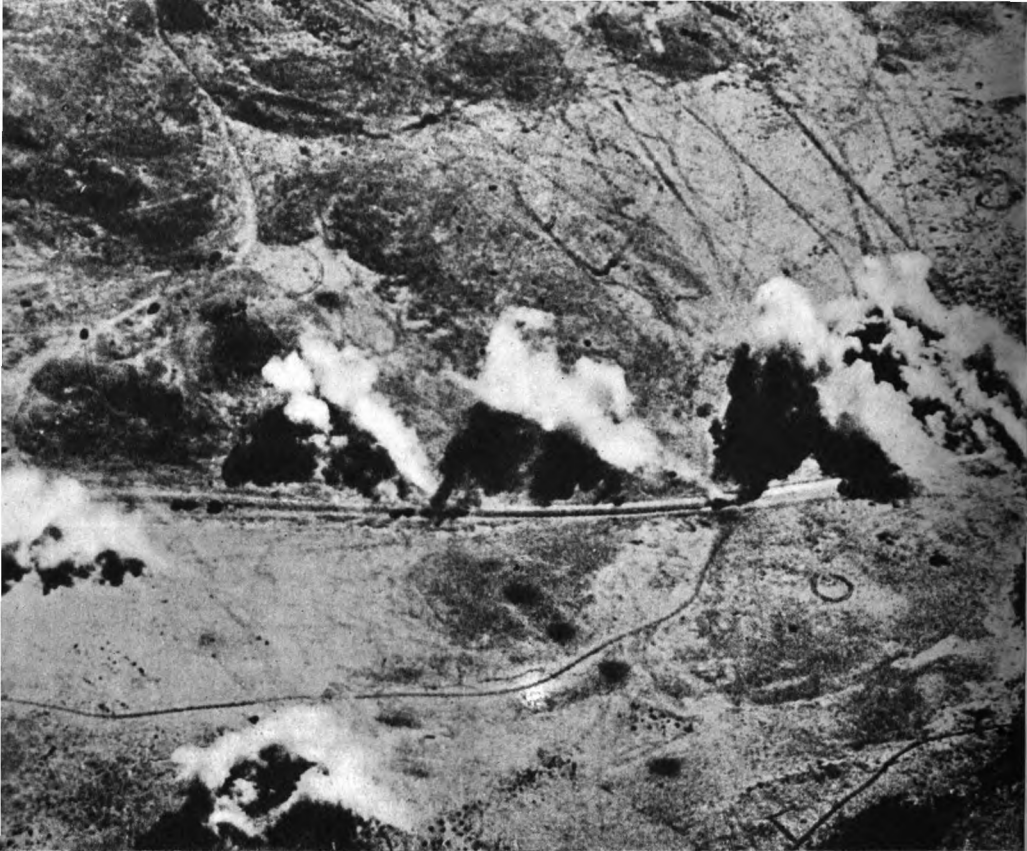




The Royal Air Force reconnaissance has taken this astonishing picture. You are looking down on Sollum Bay. The main road from Egypt to Tripoli can be seen covered with masses of black dots. Each of these dots is a German tank or lorry, three and sometimes four deep, all of them pressing westward in full retreat. Tanks jostle Mercedes in a perspiring massed column seeking quick escape from the Eighth Army.



"Crusaders" and "Shermans" of the Eighth Army hurry through Mersa Matruh on the heels of the retreating German forces.



There's no escape





Looking down from a Royal Air Force machine on the main road carrying Rommel's retreating forces as a great weight of bombs bursts around them.

from the R.A.F.

From the earliest days, long before the opening of the Eighth Army's attack on October 23rd, the R.A.F. has been pounding Rommel's airfields and communications, and Coastal Command, supported by Yugoslav squadrons, has been pounding his ports. Early in September, nearly two months before the opening of the great campaign, the R.A.F. first launched the attack, and on that great day, October 23rd, the bombers of the Royal Air Force made their biggest attack of all—a fierce concentration on enemy airfields for a depth of many miles. The result has been extraordinary. As the Eighth Army moves up it has encountered little enemy opposition from the air. Hour after hour, day after day, often goes by without the sight of a German or Italian machine. On cap-

tured airfields 550 Axis aircraft have been found, either destroyed by bombing or machine-gun fire or grounded for lack of fuel because bombing attacks of the Royal Air Force had broken all communications by sea or road. The R.A.F.'s attack is centred now on four objectives—(1) heavy formations of four-engined night bombers are attacking Genoa from airfields in Britain; (2) Benghazi, Tripoli and other harbours where supplies and men are being landed are blasted by light bombers from Egypt; (3) Forward positions and communications are being smashed by "pattern" bombing, like that shown in the picture above; (4) German and Italian sea convoys hugging the coast of Libya between Tripoli and Tobruk are being continuously bombed and broken up.

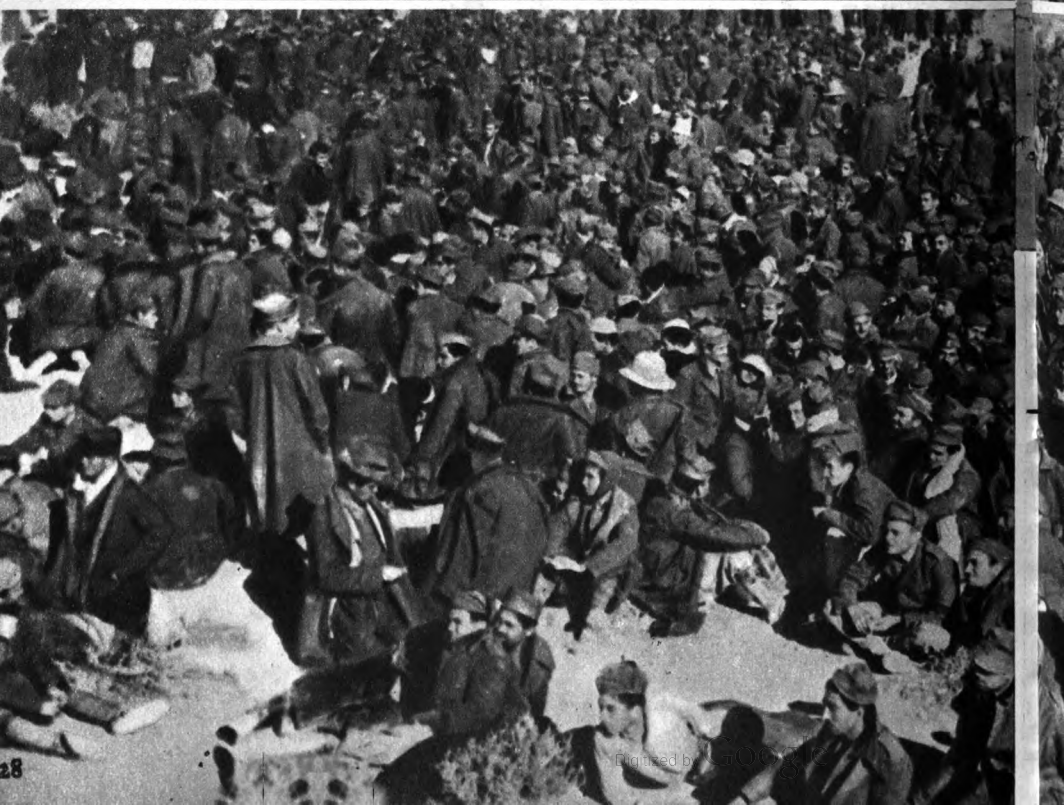
Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder (left) and Air Vice-Marshal Coningham (right) have established absolute mastery of the air.



Swinging around to the left after the break-through, New Zealanders trap thousands of Italians of the Trento, Brescia, Folgore, Pavia and Bologna Divisions. Escorted by one Eighth Army armoured car, hundreds are shepherded along to the prison cages.

. . . here come the prisoners

Some of them frankly pleased to have been captured, others depressed and angry, all of them furious with their German allies for deserting them and leaving them without transport. They await the long procession back into Egypt.





The tank battle at El Aqaaqir has produced several distinguished prisoners. Above: General Ritter von Thoma, blown out of his tank by British artillery, his face covered in dust and oil, walks over to surrender to a British officer. Below: Major Burckhardt of the Luftwaffe, commanding the German Paratroops, was also captured. On the left: Three prominent Italian Commanders, Masina, Brunetti and Bignami.





***Now turn to the
Straits of Gibraltar . . .***



Rowland Hilder, the English artist, portrays the scene as the mighty convoy threads its way towards the Straits of Gibraltar.

On November 6th an interesting "snippet" of news comes over the Axis radio! The German communiqué reads as follows:—

"During last night a fairly large enemy convoy left Gibraltar for the Mediterranean. It consisted of some aircraft carriers and other large warships.

The British evidently want to repeat the attempt to send supplies to the island fortress of Malta."

Yes, there is a very large convoy. Hundreds of freighters, liners and escort vessels. But the Germans are wrong, the convoy is *not* going to Malta!



Lieut.-General Dwight D. Eisenhower commands the Allied forces arriving in the convoy. (Later — promoted full General — he will command all Allied forces in North Africa.)

Lieut.-General K. A. N. Anderson, commanding the British First Army, which was also carried in the convoy.



A great Anglo-American effort behind the scenes

Only a few hours were necessary to expose the error in the Axis broadcast. The convoy is not on its way to Malta; it is a troopship convoy heading for Oran and Algiers in French North Africa. The Commander-in-Chief is the American General Dwight D. Eisenhower; General Anderson will command the British First Army, and General Patton the American forces. The shepherding of this great convoy—the largest in naval history—has been dramatically described by Commander Anthony Kimmins, R.N. These are extracts from his broadcast over the B.B.C. on Monday, November 16th, 1942 :—



Anglo-American force lands enemy

Commander Anthony Kimmins records the scene

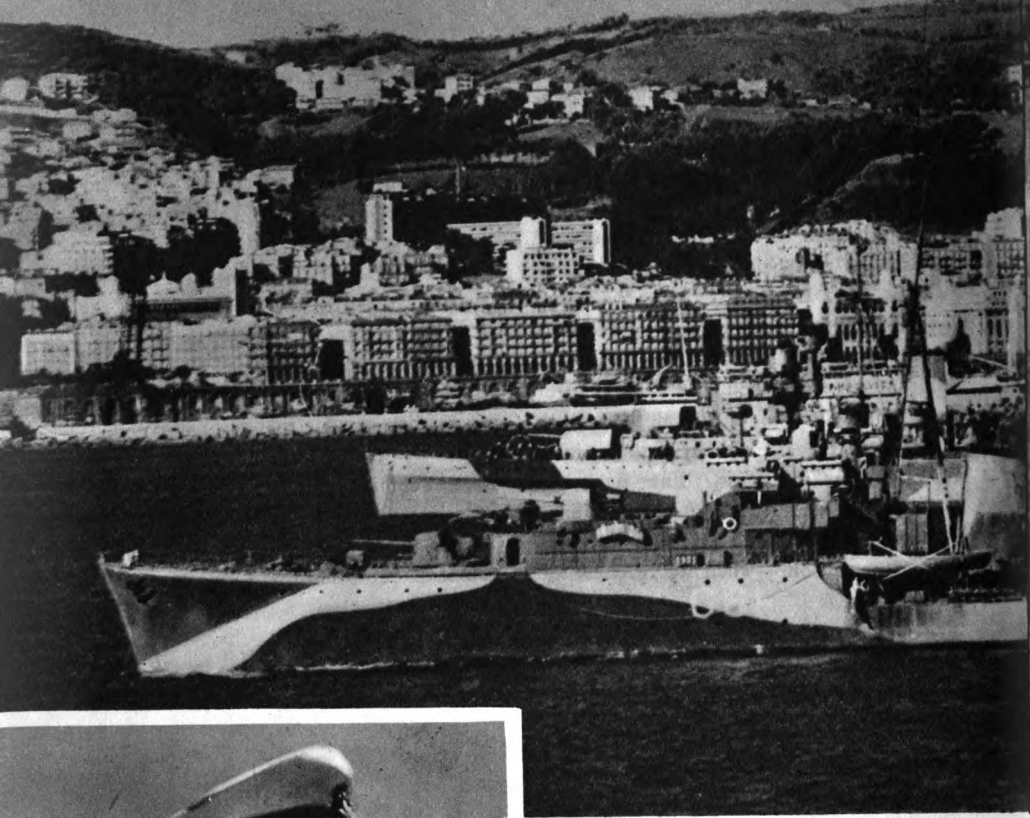
"After a surprisingly uneventful passage through the Atlantic, we passed through the Straits of Gibraltar at dead of night and next morning were well inside the Mediterranean with the snow-capped mountains of Spain away to the northward. . . . By next evening we were getting within range of enemy bombers from Sardinia and towards dusk the first attack developed. . . . Soon after nightfall we made the final turn south and before long sighted lights ahead through the darkness. The lights of Algiers. . . . At the convoy conference before sailing Admiral Burrough had said that at zero hour—when we reached the

spot at which the landing craft were to be lowered—he would make a signal on the foghorn so that all ships could stop engines together.

"That was many days ago and since then we'd steamed hundreds and hundreds of miles. Now, as we approached that moment, we knew that with the exception of one transport—which had been damaged by a torpedo, and was following astern—every ship carrying that vast expeditionary force was present. As the foghorn suddenly boomed through the night, the American General Ryder glanced at his watch and gripped my arm in a sudden burst of enthusiasm: "Can you beat it?

Landing barges carried on special derricks on the merchantmen have been lowered and run up on the beaches and here American troops move forward to occupy their first positions.





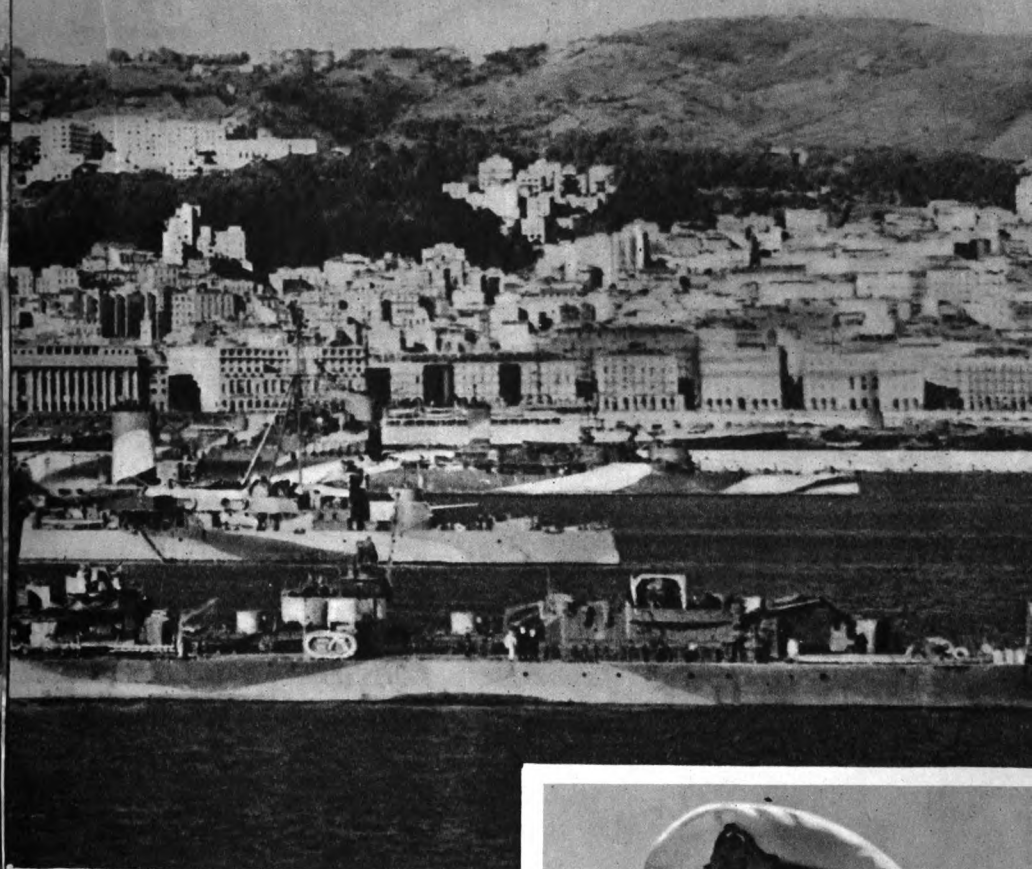
The Royal Navy



Four minutes early !”

“As soon as the ships had stopped, the boats—already crammed with troops—were lowered quietly into the water and moved off in the darkness towards the beaches. . . . At last, the first signals from shore started to filter through—two beaches had been captured without opposition. Obviously complete surprise had been effected. Then the third beach and Fort Sidi Ferruch. At some

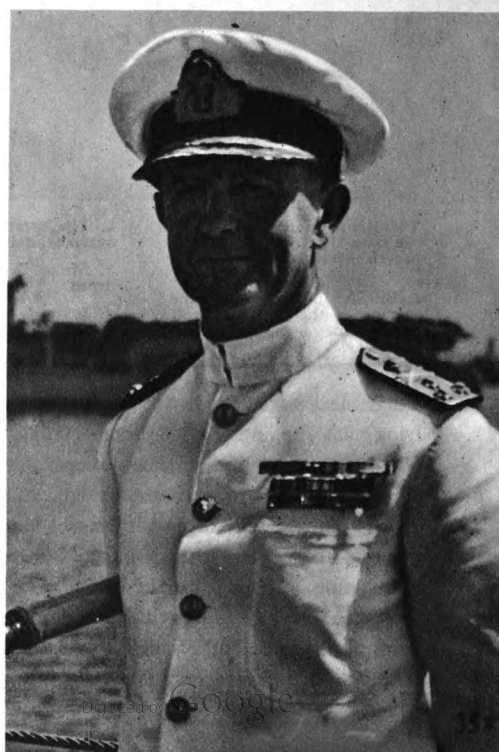
Admiral Sir Henry Harwood, who smashed the “Graf Spee” earlier in the war, is in command of the British fleet in the Mediterranean.

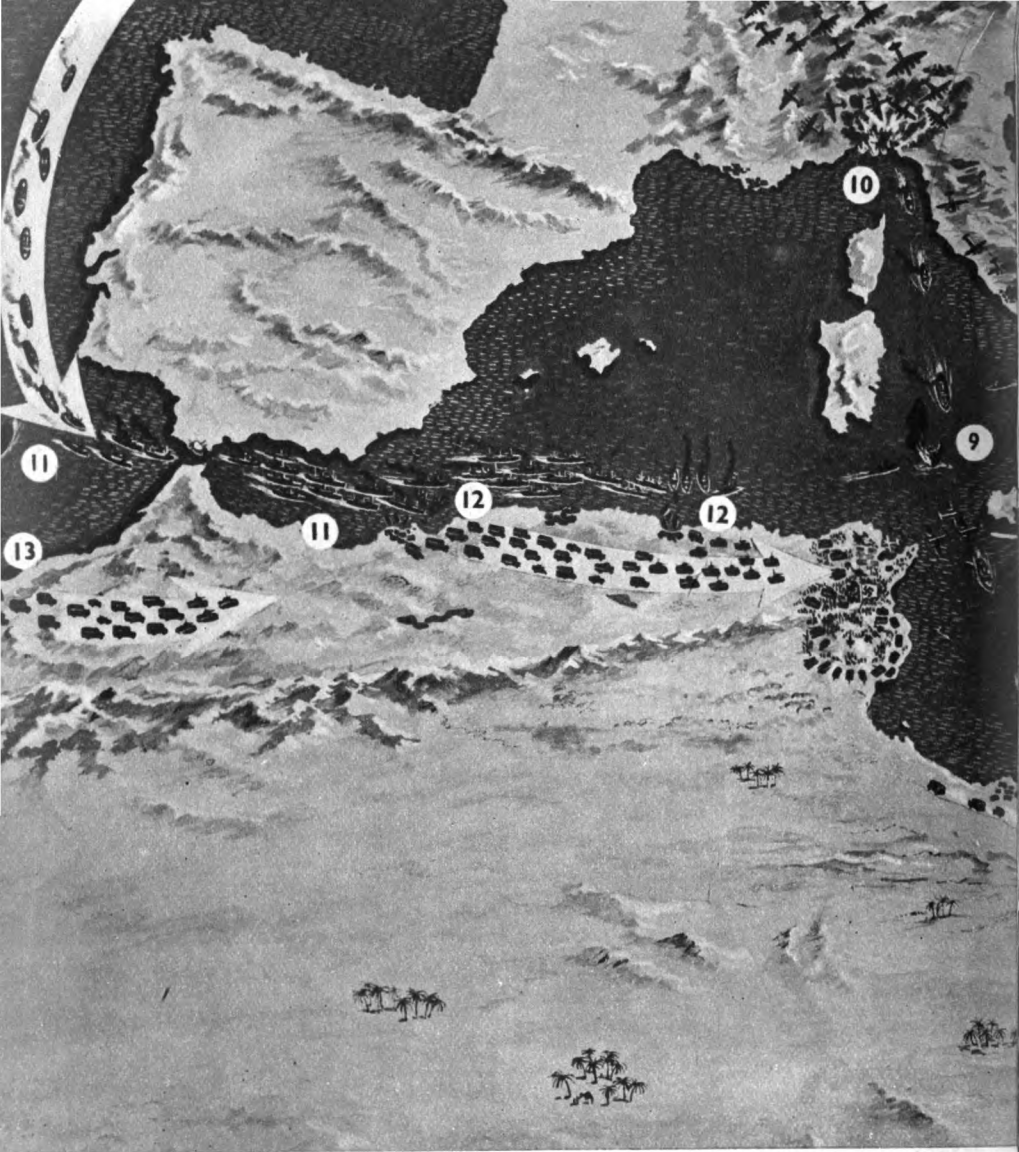


enters Algiers.

of the other forts—perched on the top of rocky promontories—the Commandos were meeting with serious opposition, but from the seaward no signs of fighting could be seen or heard. The only break in the darkness was when Hun aircraft dropped flares in an effort to attack our ships. Then suddenly there were flashes of heavy gun-fire from the direction of Algiers harbour and it was obvious that the destroyers were charging the boom.

Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham has brought the great convoy safely to its final destination in North Africa.





This simple panorama shows the true significance of this North African landing.

1. British positions at the opening of the great battle at El Alamein.

2. The great artillery barrage opens behind the lines.

3. Afrika Korps defence in depth.

4. Infantry and sappers cut a way for the tanks.

5. Mass tank formations pour through the infantry-cut gaps.

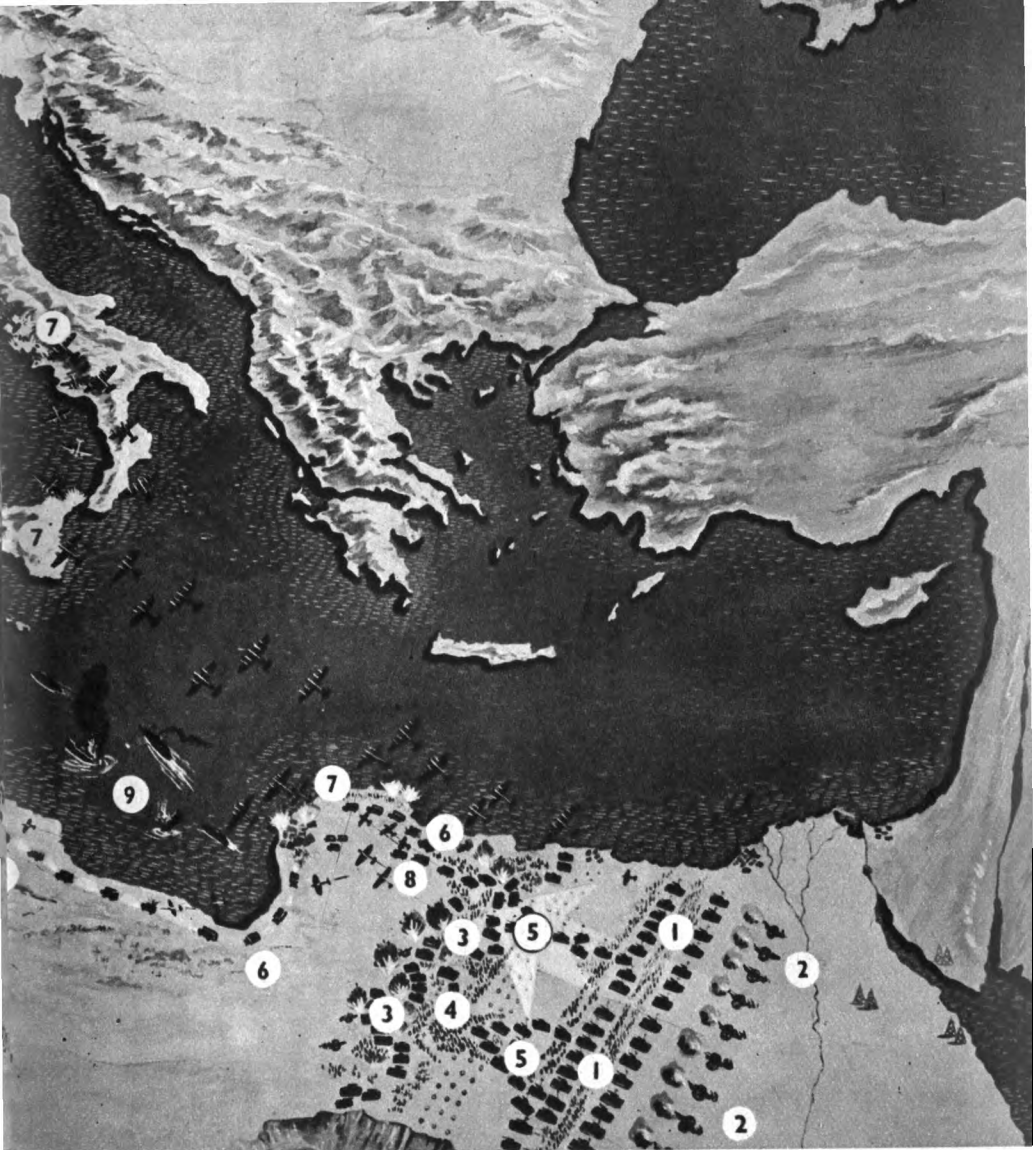
6. The Germans, broken, retire to the west.

7. The R.A.F. blast German depots, airfields and roads in Libya and Italy.

Their decks were crowded with troops lying flat behind bullet-proof plating. There was absolute silence except for whispered helm orders on the bridge. . . .

"As the dawn broke it was soon possible to pick up the details of what was going on on the beaches. The weather was holding well and at the particular beach off which we were anchored there were only small breakers

on the sandy shore. The beach was fairly flat for about a hundred yards inland and then rose more steeply as it reached the sand dunes and the tree level beyond. Landing craft by the score were hurtling to and from the transports and there were already thousands of men grouped ashore. From those groups, columns of men led away to the sand dunes and into the trees



8. Cannon-firing fighters attack Rommel's communications.

10. Giant four-engined bombers from England level the port of Genoa.

12. New American forces landing in Algeria press forward towards the enemy.

9. The Royal Navy destroys Rommel's oil and supply convoys.

11. The great convoy brings U.S. and British forces through the Straits of Gibraltar.

13. More American troops land in French Morocco.

beyond. It was all very, very like Dunkirk, except that here the troops were marching the other way. . . .

"By the time I landed, temporary roadways had already been laid to prevent heavy vehicles sinking into the sand, and we went through the woods and reached the main roads beyond. . . .

"Our reception in the village I can only describe as embarrassing. The

people cheered and waved like mad and, at the slightest opportunity, threw their arms round our necks and embraced us. It was all very touching. . . .

"Next day the situation with the French authorities was all amicably settled and, while American troops marched into Algiers to a rousing reception, ships started to enter the harbour to unload."



The Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Harold Alexander, visits Benghazi shortly after its capture.



The Eighth Army enters Benghazi

Leaving the landing of the British First Army and the American armies in Algeria we turn back now to see the progress of the Eighth Army. They have crossed the Egyptian frontier into Libya, recaptured Tobruk, roared through the green lands of Cyrenaica and chased Rommel to El Agheila. Benghazi has fallen to the Eighth Army.

Alaric Jacob, War Reporter for the London paper *Daily Express*, was with the Eighth Army when it entered Benghazi. Here he records his impression as he enters the town:—

“This city—capital of Cyrenaica—typifies the decline and fall of the second Roman Empire. It now looks like the ruins of Pompeii. It is in a far worse mess than it was last year when we were here—and that was bad enough. Giant ‘Liberators’ of the R.A.F. and American Air Force have been working on the place since then, and Benghazi is now only a shell of the rococo capital of stucco and imitation marble it once was. The first British column entered it last evening. This morning other units have swelled the garrison. They swept in, coming along the coast road from Tocra and Barce. I travelled with the main body. As we passed beneath the bogus Roman arch erected in Mussolini’s honour at the town’s eastern approach the speedometer on my car registered 2,464 miles since leaving Cairo, and we entered Benghazi just 29 days after the first tremendous artillery barrage began the offensive at El Alamein. The town is wretched beyond description, and the port is battered into odd arabesques of twisted iron and concrete. A large Axis ship was still blazing at the harbour’s mouth after being bombed by ‘Liberators’

nine nights ago. The vessel had broken in two, yet each portion was still alight. . . .

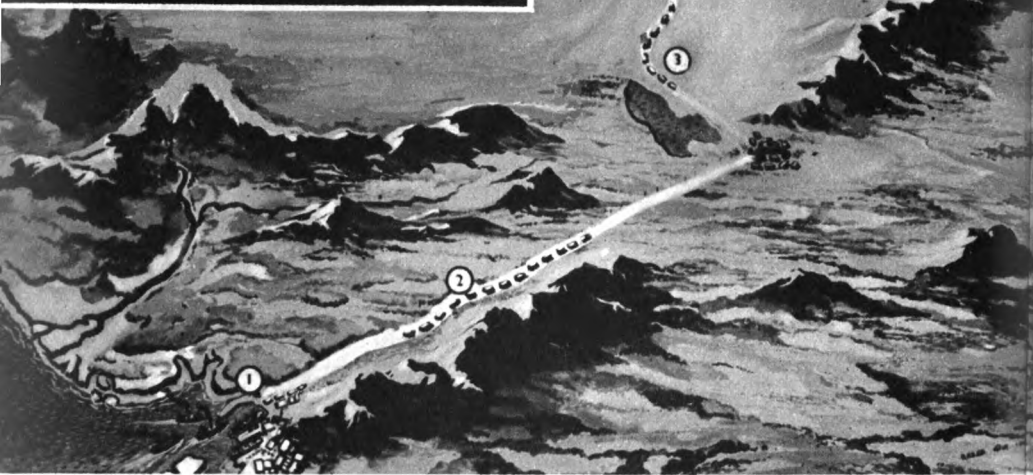
“In the hospital were fourteen British and South African soldiers. . . . One of them, an English tank driver, said that when the Alamein offensive started his German guard gave him the news, and said: ‘Your general has made some gains, but Rommel has a big surprise for him; he will hold you at Hellfire Pass and then sweep round and cut you off.’ Two days later the same German approached with a look of resignation on his face, with hands crossed as though manacled, and saying: ‘It seems we shall all be prisoners at Alexandria.’ That was the first indication prisoners here had that our offensive was going well. . . .

“The Germans left Benghazi about five days ago. The Italians began leaving then, but their evacuation moved more slowly. An Italian tank was still burning as I entered the town to-day, so it seems that the last Italians have not long been gone. . . .

“The Axis troops made a poor job of demolition. As I approached to-day black smoke ascended from various fires. But only a few minor dumps and one or two tanks and vehicles were burning. The truth is Benghazi was an Axis supply base of such magnitude and its stores were so widely scattered for safety that thorough destruction was difficult. . . .

“Some of the first tanks which trundled into Benghazi came all the way from Alamein on their own tracks. They fought their way through the Rommel line and all the way here without maintenance except what the crews could give them on the road—a remarkable feat of tankcraft.”

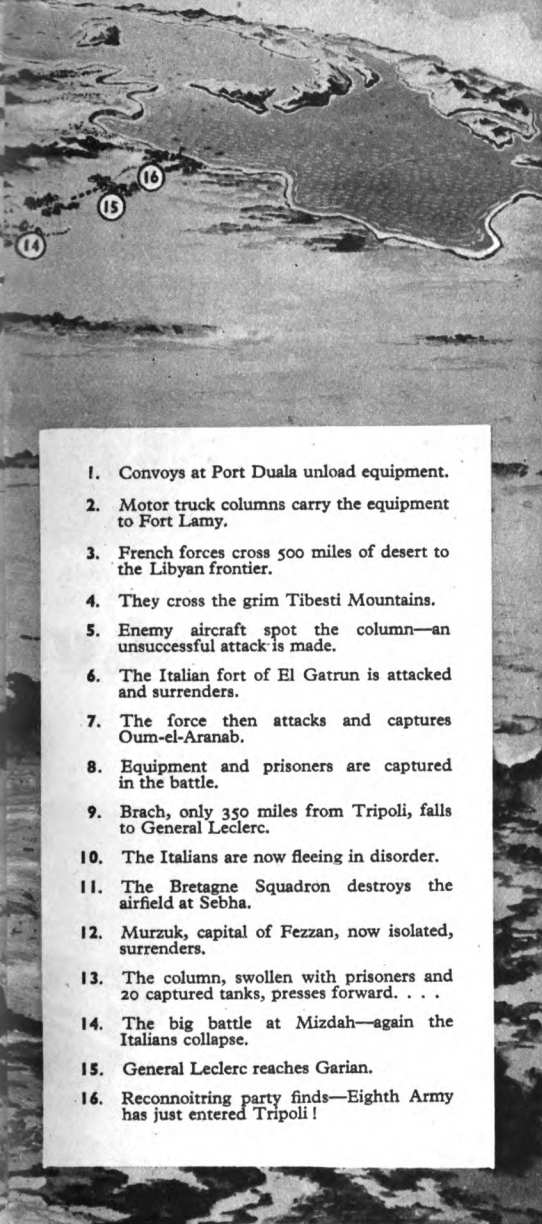
French Forces have cleared Central Libya



As the Eighth Army advances westward in pursuit of the retreating enemy, and Britain's First Army and the American armies advance eastward from Algiers and Oran, the flanks of their converging forces are open to attack from enemy units stationed in Central and Southern Libya. Turn now to West Africa and see the phenomenal accomplishment of the French General Leclerc. Acting under the orders of General de Gaulle he started weeks ago to push northwards towards the Sahara from Port Duala in the French Cameroons. He commands a

motley but brave band of warriors, rather of the style of the French Foreign Legion. The column is well equipped—100 per cent. motorised.

Turbaned Meharistes from the Tibesti mountains, Senegalese from the Chad and many young Frenchmen who have escaped from France, make up this adventurous band of patriots. Along their trek they repeatedly run into units of the enemy. First, they attack the Italian fort of El Gatrún, taking 177 prisoners. Then Oum-el-Aranab, capturing several



1. Convoys at Port Duala unload equipment.
2. Motor truck columns carry the equipment to Fort Lamy.
3. French forces cross 500 miles of desert to the Libyan frontier.
4. They cross the grim Tibesti Mountains.
5. Enemy aircraft spot the column—an unsuccessful attack is made.
6. The Italian fort of El Gatrun is attacked and surrenders.
7. The force then attacks and captures Oum-el-Aranab.
8. Equipment and prisoners are captured in the battle.
9. Brach, only 350 miles from Tripoli, falls to General Leclerc.
10. The Italians are now fleeing in disorder.
11. The Bretagne Squadron destroys the airfield at Sebha.
12. Murzuk, capital of Fezzan, now isolated, surrenders.
13. The column, swollen with prisoners and 20 captured tanks, presses forward. . . .
14. The big battle at Mizdah—again the Italians collapse.
15. General Leclerc reaches Garian.
16. Reconnoitring party finds—Eighth Army has just entered Tripoli!



His task completed—General Leclerc (on the right) with his officers after their arrival in Tripoli.



During the great trek the column's artillery was often in use.



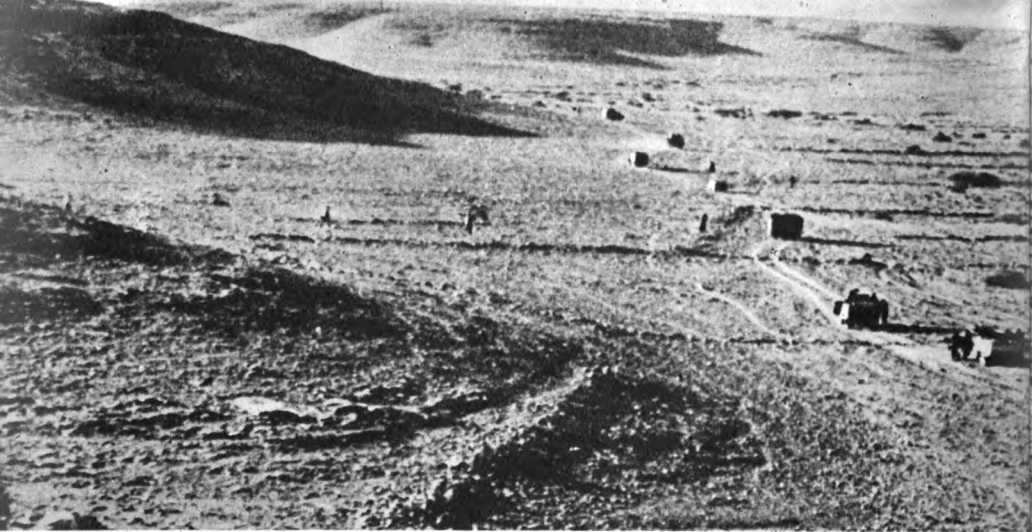
After a triumphant trek of 1,200 miles General Leclerc's forces enjoy a ride along the Tripoli promenade.

hundred prisoners after a three-day attack. Other strong points fall in swift succession. Sebha, where they capture twenty brand new Italian M.13 tanks. Mizdah, the fiercest battle of all before the Italians finally surrendered. Then on to Tripoli, driving the Italians before them.

While General Montgomery is advancing from Benghazi towards Tripoli General Leclerc has brought his men across Africa, wiping out all the Italian garrisons and airfields. Their adventures are recorded in the picture map above.



They meet and exchange cigarettes with their comrades of Britain's Eighth Army.



Rommel outflanked at

Below : The end of the Italian Empire. General Montgomery, with his interpreter standing by, dictates the terms of surrender to the Italian authorities in Tripoli.





Above : This is the "left hook" that Rommel never thought possible. The armoured columns fight their way across appalling desert to the little town of Tarhuna, near Tripoli.

Tripoli—the end of the Italian Empire



For weeks the Eighth Army has been pushing on after the fall of Benghazi under appalling desert conditions. Grueling sand and rock, without water, requiring the most skilled planning of supply columns, have slowed it down, but the worst is past, and at the little town of Homs, not many miles from Tripoli where it is obvious Rommel will make a stand, General Montgomery divides his force into two parts. One part will proceed along the coast road, the other will turn inland through the little town of Tarhuna and attack Tripoli by a left hook. Rommel does not expect this move—he considers the conditions to be impossible, but the armoured divisions of the Eighth Army and the New Zealanders overcome all difficulties. Oldest desert veterans in this left hook force say that never before have they encountered such appalling terrain. After stubborn resistance by Rommel's forces in the pass leading into Tarhuna the Eighth Army makes its triumphal entry, warmly greeted by the Italian people. Rommel again pulls out westward towards Tunisia. Tripoli surrenders, and at the Porto Benito General Montgomery dictates the terms of surrender to the Italian authorities.

A memorable day—

Winston Churchill arrives

Godfrey Talbot records the scene

Tripoli is now in the hands of the Eighth Army. The last of the Italian Empire has been liquidated. General Montgomery, a few days ago, held a review of his troops, and this is another memorable day—Winston Churchill, Britain's Prime Minister, who has been at Casablanca, for the "Unconditional Surrender" conference, has arrived by air. It is to be a day of "spit and polish"—a day of parades. Only a little while ago the big four-engined "Liberator" touched down at a nearby airfield and Winston Churchill, after greeting General Montgomery, now meets the men of the triumphant Eighth Army. Godfrey Talbot of the B.B.C. recorded the scene in these words for the British people :—

"This afternoon, in open country somewhere near Tripoli, only a few yards from where I'm standing at the moment, Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Britain, is walking towards a group of men of the Eighth Army; only an hour or so ago he arrived near here by air, and now he's just walked along this lane where I'm standing with the microphone — Winston Churchill, dressed in the uniform of Air Commodore of the Royal Air Force, and accompanied by General Alexander. At the moment there are so many senior officers with red bands round their caps that I find it difficult to sort them out, because I'm standing with a very bright sun in my eyes, but—yes—there is General Alexander, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, and there is General Montgomery, in his black beret and battledress. Now Mr. Churchill is just going along a line of senior officers shaking hands with them. He looks very fit and very well; he's smiling. . . . And now he's mounting a pile of sandbags, and up on to a rough platform, which has been arranged in a small natural amphitheatre underneath some blue gum trees, eucalyptus trees, and he's facing where we've got our B.B.C.

microphone, and I'm now going to switch you over to him."

The Prime Minister then spoke to the men as follows :—

"You have altered the face of the war in the most remarkable way. What this must have meant in care and organisation of the whole movement and manœuvres; what it must have meant in the endurance, tireless endurance, and self-denial of the troops, and in the fearless leadership in action, can only be appreciated by those who were actually on the spot. But I must tell you that your fame, the fame of the Desert Army, has spread throughout the world. It must have been a great relief to you when, after all these hundreds of miles in the desert, you came once again into green lands, with trees and grass and water—and I do not think that you will lose that advantage. As you go forward on the further mission which will fall to your lot, you will fight in country which will present, no doubt, serious practical difficulties, but which none the less will not have the grim and severe character of the Western Desert, which you have known how to endure, and how to overcome."

Proceeding from the open country to the town of Tripoli, Mr. Churchill passed round the harbour, and the units of the Royal Navy gave him a tremendous welcome. Here is Godfrey Talbot describing the scene from the quayside :—

"The sound that you can hear comes from beyond the waterfront of Tripoli, and beyond the harbour there. Mr. Churchill at this moment is motoring along the waterfront, and various ships are sounding on their sirens and hooters a greeting and a salutation to him in the "V" sign—the dot, dot, dash—listen; various ships are vying with each other in giving the signal."

And now we join Godfrey Talbot in



Britain's Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, dressed in the uniform of Air Commodore of the Royal Air Force, arriving at Castel Benito Airfield, alights from his plane to greet General Montgomery of the Eighth Army, who steps forward with his hand outstretched in greeting.



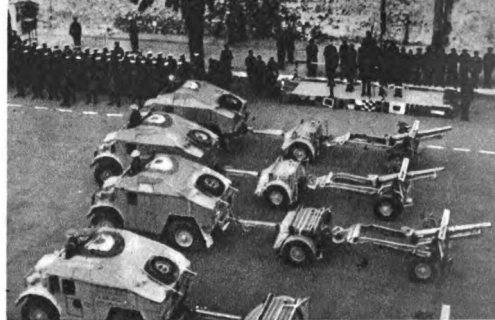
The historic scene in the main avenue of Tripoli when the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, standing in General Montgomery's staff car, reviews the victorious armoured divisions of the Eighth Army. He is followed by General Alexander, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces, riding in a large captured German staff car.

the main square of Tripoli where he is recording the description of the triumphant procession before Mr. Churchill :—

"... in this main square, you're hearing the bagpipes and drums of the Highland troops. Tripoli has never seen such a sight as this—the great march-past before Mr. Churchill, the C.-in-C., General Alexander, Sir Alan Brooke and General Montgomery; the march-past is just beginning, and it began, as you heard, with the massed pipes and drums

of the Highlanders, and then, a sight which one very, very rarely sees—I doubt if it's happened before—a Divisional Commander riding in a Bren Carrier with his Divisional Flag flying above him, leading the march-past in the Carrier. Now the band has turned off into a side street, going between lines of tanks and infantrymen and armoured cars. . . ."

Then the guns went by, some of those magnificent 25-pounders which have done



The famous 25-pounders file past the saluting base.



Then come the Motorised Infantry Units.



The march-past of a Highland Regiment.

such a wonderful job in Libya, keeping perfect line, four abreast, through Tripoli Square.

"And now, following the band, following the guns, following the signals, there comes the infantry. . . . It's a wonderful sight. I suppose they always march their best on a parade, but this morning there seems something, something extra about the way these men are going past, their rifles on their shoulders, their arms swinging absolutely as one."



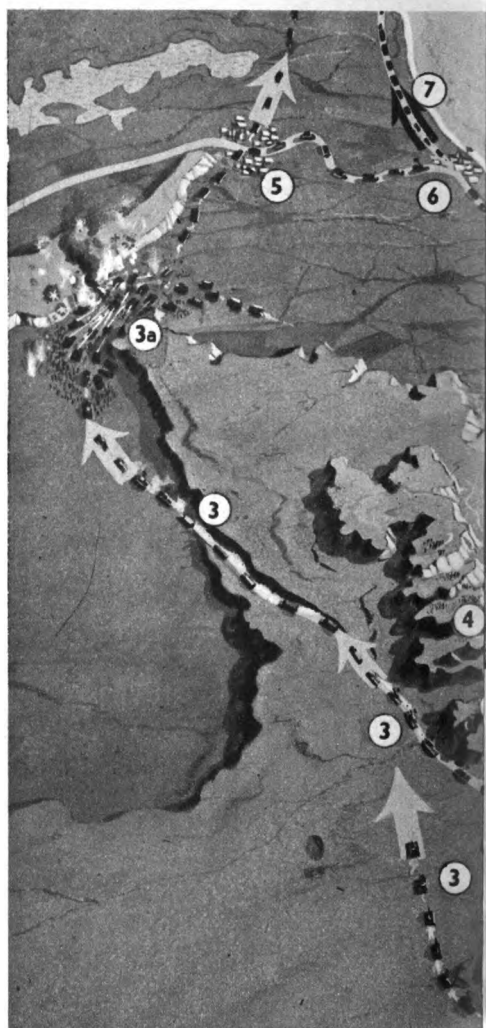
Mr. Churchill waves goodbye to the men of the Eighth Army.

Mareth Line falls to the Eighth Army

With the fall of Tripoli, Rommel withdraws again, this time into Tunisia behind the great bastion of the Mareth line (a strong defensive position erected by the French in the happier days before the War). Part of the defences is a deep wadi, the Wadi Zigzaou. General Montgomery decides to bridge the wadi at a point midway between the coast and the village of Mareth. Under heavy fire from the Germans a causeway is laid across the wadi and a bridgehead established, but sudden tropical rain flooding the wadi causes a hold-up. Again the left hook tactics are successful. A powerful force is sent around the back of the Matmata Mountains to cut its way through El Hamma to the town of Gabès, while Indian troops resolutely clear the mountains.

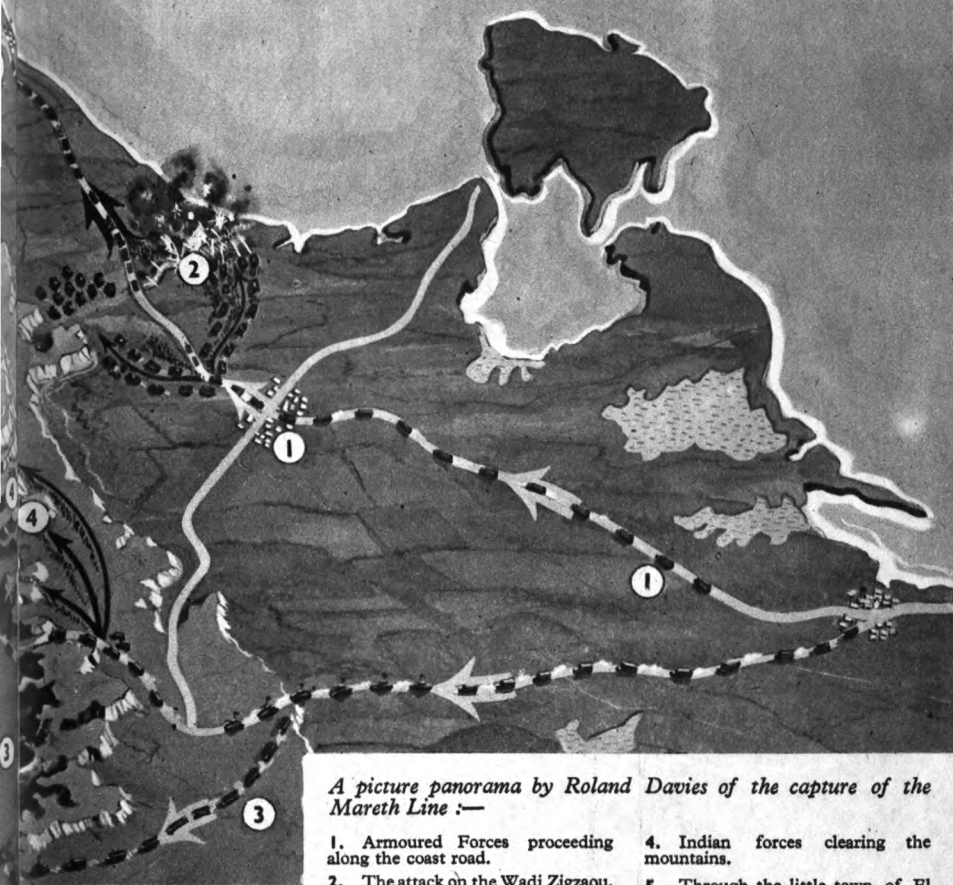
Frank Gillard, the B.B.C.'s Commentator, recorded this impression of the outgoing left hook troops :—

" I first saw this outflanking force from the air. Early one morning, I climbed into the rear cockpit . . . and for nearly two hours our mission took us forward and back again over that long column of vehicles moving northwards on the far side of the Matmata Mountains. . . . An hour or so after I'd landed at the airfield, we in the B.B.C. recording truck were chasing after that column ; and it took some catching up. . . . When we reached the tail of the convoy, we found vehicles on either side of us, heaving to and fro, rolling and dipping as they forged ahead, just for all the world like a fleet of little ships on a stormy sea . . . a stiff wind sprang up. . . . For 24 hours and more this dust storm blew, the sand penetrated everything. It was in your eyes, in your hair, it gritted between your teeth, it



made you cough and sneeze, it parched your throat, but it didn't stop this moving army. . . .

" Well, that's how this column moved forward to battle—but not every vehicle along those tracks was going forward : some—dozens and dozens of them—were going the other way, back towards our bases, and the sight of them was an enormous encouragement, for they were filled to overflowing with German and Italian prisoners."



A picture panorama by Roland Davies of the capture of the Mareth Line :—

1. Armoured Forces proceeding along the coast road.
2. The attack on the Wadi Zigzaou.
3. Armoured outflanking forces proceeding round the Matmata Mountains, to meet heavy resistance at 3A.
4. Indian forces clearing the mountains.
5. Through the little town of El Hamma.
6. Into the town of Gabès.
7. Rommel's line of retreat.

General Montgomery relies upon his magnificent Gurkhas to clear the enemy from the Matmata Mountains. Their experience in mountain fighting and their skill with the kukri enable them to wreak havoc among the Axis troops.



The beginning



of the end



With the fall of the Mareth Line the country has now changed. The Eighth Army has entered Tunisia and leaves blistering desert warfare for mountain fighting. More than that, at long last it is nearing its comrades—General Anderson's First Army, General Eisenhower's American and General Giraud's French Forces. On the road leading from Gafsa north-west of Gabès the men of the Eighth Army and the men of the United States Army first make contact, leaping from their cars to greet each other.

For months now after their initial rush upon landing at Algiers and Oran, the First Army and the American forces have held their mountain positions through rains and severe conditions. The hour for the great attack is drawing near. Look at this picture map of the positions as held at this stage of the campaign. The French Forces under General Giraud hold the extreme left flank (1); beside them are the Americans under General Bradley (2) about to converge on Bizerta through the little town of Mateur; then comes the broad flank held by the First Army under General Anderson (3) which advances on Tunis via Medjez El Bab and Tebourba; (4) further French Forces will attack via Pont du Fahs (4a); and the Eighth Army are along the coast at Enfidaville (5).

Field Marshal Rommel has been withdrawn by Hitler to Europe and replaced by General von Arnim, to the disgust of the Italian Marshal Messe. Supreme command of all the Allied Forces now that they have entered the Tunisian zone is in the hands of the American General Eisenhower. General Alexander is Deputy Commander-in-Chief, General Anderson commands the First Army, General Montgomery commands the Eighth Army, and General Giraud commands the French North African forces.

The converging attack begins. One by one passes leading through the mountains into Tunis and Bizerta are forced and peaks such as Longstop Hill fall to the First Army.

The Americans, now commanded by the famous Infantry General Bradley, press through Mateur on towards Bizerta.



On the day before the attack on Tunis, infantry of the First Army under General Anderson make their way under fire across open country before entering the capital.

Through the mountains

The country now becomes mountainous and roadless except for a few tracks leading through the passes. The weight of the fighting falls upon the infantry advancing on foot. Bayonet charges and hand-to-hand fighting are taking place on the summits of crags and hills. Supplies are being carried up by mules. Steadily the First Army, with the Americans and French, is closing the

ring surrounding von Arnim and the demoralised Axis Forces. The master stroke leading to the fall of Tunis and the final collapse of the Axis is made by General Anderson of the First Army. By his dispositions and his skill he led General von Arnim to believe that the main Allied attack would come at the area of Pont du Fahs. At the same time he secretly masses his men and

Fighting their way through Mateur in the Tunisian mountains, American forces under General Bradley finally reach Bizerta. Here the first American detachments are seen entering the outskirts of the city.





A Brigade of British Paratroops is visited by General Eisenhower. He thanks them for their work in the swift occupation and repair of enemy airfields. After the inspection they cheer their Commander-in-Chief.

to Tunis

equipment and without warning attacks the German positions heavily at a point nearly 25 miles away in the area of Medjez El Bab. His action completely confuses the Germans who finally attempt to withdraw from Tunis to the Cape Bon Peninsula, but are cut off. The main body of the enemy including the Commander-in-Chief, von Arnim, with his headquarters at Saint Marie du Zit are

caught between the First and Eighth Armies. On May 7th Tunis is taken by the British and Bizerta by the Americans. With his armies broken and all communications disrupted, unable to stage an evacuation, unconditional surrender is accepted on May 13th, 1943.

General von Arnim and his staff have actually been captured at their headquarters by a motorised detachment of Indian troops.

So complete was Anglo-American staff co-operation that at one point large American forces were transferred successfully from one sector to another across the British lines of communication. Here Major General Omar N. Bradley commanding the U.S. Second Corps confers with General Anderson (First Army).





Scenes of indescribable joy on the part of the population mark the entry of the British First Army into Tunis. This great crowd of French citizens waving the flags of Britain, France and the United States of America excitedly greet the soldiers of General Anderson's First Army



British soldiers are given a most friendly welcome by the young people of Tunis.





General Jurgin von Arnim, Commander-in-Chief of the Axis forces in Africa, has surrendered and is arriving in a British staff car at British Headquarters.

The great surrender — an eye-witness account

Douglas Brass, War Correspondent of the "Melbourne Herald" Cable Service and of the London "Evening Standard," cables this remarkable word-picture of the final German and Italian debacle at Cape Bon:—

"There are fires all around us here now. There are recurring explosions as the Germans destroy their last dumps. Black, billowing smoke is rolling across a perfect sky. The Germans are coming in in streams from all sides. Some of them are singing, others are sullen, glum and frowning at us. God knows how many there are. . . .

"Cape Bon lighthouse is above me. It is like a pimple on the back of a sleeping lion—the last broad, sloping hill in German-occupied Africa.

"This is finale. This chaos around me now is Germany's Dunkirk that didn't come off. . . .

"They are throwing away their arms this moment, these Germans and the remnants of these Italians. Officers are hurling their pistols from them . . . the grim, haughty soldiers of the Hermann Göring Regiment are breaking the butts of their rifles before they raise their white flags. . . .

"'I have a whole company here intact,' says one Nazi officer. 'We have our supplies and our cookhouse. In which direction shall we go?' . . .

"'Everywhere it is confusion. It is victory too big, too overwhelming, to take in all at once.

"We have just arrived here, a party



General Montgomery, accompanied by his Staff Officers, is in consultation with the captured Italian Marshal Messe and German General von Liebenstein. He shows them on the map the points where he wishes the surrendered Axis forces to concentrate.

of four journalists. We came through with the armoured cars which throughout to-day have been feeling and pushing their way up the peninsula's west coast, always expecting resistance—the old 88mm. gun or an ambush, perhaps a full-scale heroic last stand by a battalion which still had heart. But there has been little of that.

"Ten miles back there was one miserable stand. An 88mm. gun fired down the road at our approach. Our following

column of 'Churchill' tanks was called in and went forward. The Nazi gun crew demolished their gun and raised the white flag.

"We felt the heat of that burning gun as we passed on. . . .

"They are coming in to-day in their own vehicles, their long, jolting lines of trucks and carriers and staff cars stretching already for miles back towards Tunis.

"They are packed in, twenty-five to

Marshal Messe, on his way into captivity, waves goodbye to his men.





Axis prisoners surrendered in such enormous numbers that it is only possible to provide one guard for every 300 prisoners. Here are two of the temporary cages for prisoners. Germans are on the left, Italians on the right.

a truck, wedged in with their blankets and canned foods and packs.

"Many Germans are singing in their trucks to the accompaniment of banjos and flutes. Some have their dogs with them, fine Alsations, glum-looking spaniels, an occasional sausage dog.

"Their trucks have all the famous Afrika Korps insignia brightly painted fore and aft. Some trucks in the columns

Italians, smiling happily, drive in on their own cars to surrender. . . .



are filled with released British prisoners cheering wildly as we pass. . . . German officers are riding in their staff cars, prim and upright in their field grey and high peaked caps. A Luftwaffe pilot sails by in a jeep. A doctor asks us where he can get medical aid for wounded men. One tipsy party of Germans throw sweets to us as they swing past. A limping Ninetieth Light Division man exchanges his match for my cigarette. . . .

"One thing I want to emphasise is the immense quantity of equipment which to-day has fallen into British hands. . . . I have seen a quartermaster's stores to-day piled high with clothing and general equipment. I have motored past two miles of ammunition heaps and seen heaps of small arms and machine-guns. . . .

"This thrust through to Cape Bon has been entirely a First Army affair. It has been rapid, dramatic and almost unexpected. . . . From Soliman town, well down the peninsula, we moved forward with the Fourth British Division's Armoured Reconnaissance Group. . . . The Allied Air Force bomb line was just ahead of us throughout the morning.



Men in carriers were wearing distinctively coloured scarves. So close were they to the enemy that they had to duck when our fighter-bombers came over.

"One air attack came over while we were eating newly discovered red sauerkraut by the roadside. Our luncheon party finished up in a ditch. . . . We sighted Cape Bon lighthouse just before four o'clock. We counted seventeen dump fires burning. The men who were going up couldn't believe it. 'The sea has been absolutely empty,' an observation officer said. 'It's hard to credit it after all this talk of evacuation.'

"Traffic now was becoming thick. German vehicles were crowding on to the road, passing our armour as it pushed on. There were traffic jams among British and German vehicles.

"German N.C.O.s were jumping out and trying to straighten them out.

"Nobody was looking after these Germans. There were not enough troops to spare.

"They were driving in practically in convoy. The Afrika Korps was coming south as British reconnaissance cars were moving north. . . .

"I talked with the first military policeman I had seen in fifteen miles.

'We can't possibly supply escorts for these Jerries,' he explained. 'We can manage about one man to every 300 or so.' There are trucks coming past now with tea towels as white flags. Spotless tea towels at this stage of the campaign! These Germans are a fastidious race.

"Along these dark roads to-night I have overtaken about 50,000 prisoners. Their vehicles cover the road from Cape Bon itself to ten miles south of Tunis—more than 60 miles of laden trucks, in sections almost head to tail. . . .

. . . so do the Germans. These men are piled high on a German staff car.





The Commander-in-Chief of all the Allied forces, the American General Dwight D. Eisenhower, talks with his Deputy Commander-in-Chief, General Alexander.



General Alexander and General Anderson of the First Army drive together to the Parade.



Admiral Cunningham talks with Air Chief Marshal Tedder.



The cameraman catches the three famous French Generals (reading from left to right) General Juin, General Catroux and the Commander-in-Chief of the French Forces, General Giraud.

GLORIOUS

The great



FINALE

Victory Parade at Tunis



On the saluting base, reading from left to right—General Juin, General Alexander, General Anderson, Air Chief Marshal Tedder, Admiral Cunningham, the American Admiral Hewitt, General Eisenhower and General Giraud.

Infantry units of the United States Army pass in review.

An Armoured Division of the British Army seen in the procession.







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MAINTAINED IN GREAT BRITAIN

CAPE DON

May 13th, 1943



PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN



An historic meeting in a Tunisian field (see page 51). General Montgomery's Eighth Army has fought its way from El Alamein only 60 miles from Alexandria to Gafsa in Tunisia to link up with American forces approaching from the west. Above, an Army photographer records the scene when the Commander-in-Chief North Africa, General Eisenhower, meets and shakes the hand of General Montgomery, British Eighth Army.